

April 25, 1960

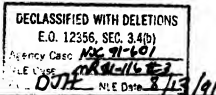
MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
April 24, 1960



Others present: General de Gaulle, Mr. Claude Lebel
Lt. Colonel Vernon Walters

The President opened the conversation by asking General de Gaulle whether he had had an opportunity to read the papers which the President had given him on the day of his arrival. General de Gaulle said that he had read the papers. With regard to the first one relating to the deterrent capabilities of the United States, he was taking note of it. With regard to the one on the summit procedures, he had read it and was in agreement with it and would write the letter to Khrushchev and set forth the summit procedures as the Western powers understood them. His thought was that on the opening day they might hold a short session of about an hour to agree on general principles (Chiefs of Government session). Thereafter on every day they would meet every morning with Ministers and Ambassadors and leave the afternoons free for bilateral contacts. On Monday, the final day, a major session could be held with all of the delegations present.

The President said that he felt we should not put a final date on the conference before it starts, but that he would have no objection to having such a final session on the last day of the conference, whenever that might be. General de Gaulle said that that was what he meant; he did not mean Monday to be the last day necessarily. He did believe, however, that the President had some commitment in Portugal and also could not remain outside of the United States for a great length of time. The President said that he had promised to go to Portugal as he had not been there since 1951. The Portuguese were a little touchy because he had been to Spain last December and had spent the night there, so he had agreed to go to Portugal, but if it were necessary he could return to Paris from Lisbon, and return directly to the United States from Paris if the summit meeting lasted a few days more. If he had to return to the United States because of pressing government business, Mr. Nixon might come over and head the United States delegation.



General de Gaulle said that this would be agreeable to him but, as the President knew, Mr. Khrushchev did not like Mr. Nixon. The President said that this might not be bad. When Mr. Nixon had gone to Russia, the President had told him to take his cue from the Russians. If they were courteous he should be equally courteous, and if they were sharp to behave in like manner. When Mr. Khrushchev had talked roughly, Mr. Nixon had talked back to him and Mr. Khrushchev had not liked this. The President explained that Mr. Nixon was so close and so loyal he could send him over to the summit if he himself had to return. The President said that he had also mentioned this possibility to Mr. Khrushchev in a letter. The Vice President had acquired extraordinary experience during the past eight years and the President had made every effort to ensure that he was fully aware of all that was going on and able to assume any responsibility if called upon to do so.



The President then asked General de Gaulle if he had read the "think" paper he had given him, and General de Gaulle said that he had. On Berlin and Germany, General de Gaulle felt we should say that this should be left aside for the time being (at the summit). We should tell Khrushchev that the settlement of these problems required a more relaxed atmosphere, and we should first endeavor to see what could be done in other areas. With regard to cultural, touristic, student and other exchanges, he said that he felt we should offer to increase these and asked whether the President would have any difficulty in accepting larger numbers of Russians in the United States. The President replied that he would not have any difficulty in so doing, and we could well propose to the Soviets to double whatever the present figures were, or even triple. The advantage of this was that if the numbers exchanged were very small, it was easy for the Russians to send only a few well indoctrinated party members, but if the numbers were large, this was much more difficult for them. General de Gaulle said that he entirely agreed with this and that we could look into making some such proposal, and also give a hint that if all went well with such a program we might think about greater trade.

With regard to disarmament, General de Gaulle wondered how we might take this up with the Russians. The President said that the basis for any sound disarmament program must be effective mutual inspection. His feeling was that we might propose some area, perhaps Germany east of the Rhine, Holland and Denmark on our side and perhaps other areas in Turkey or Iran so as not to put the finger too much on Central Europe, and then try and see whether we could effectively and mutually inspect the corresponding corresponding areas on the Russian side and on our side. He would be quite agreeable to including Alaska and parts of North Eastern Siberia also. It was essential to develop techniques of inspection and find out whether the Russians would really allow effective inspection.



General de Gaulle said that he agreed that effective inspection was vital but he wondered whether it would be possible to perhaps agree to.....
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The President said that that would involve inspection of all parts of the Soviet Union and he did not believe that the Soviets would agree to this. He had made his "Open Skies" proposal at Geneva in 1955 and Khrushchev had rejected this as being "espionage" and merely for overflights. It was also essential to find out whether teams could operate in an effective manner on the ground. He doubted very much whether Khrushchev would ever agree to this, and that is why he had proposed something more modest, namely trying to see whether effective inspection could be obtained for a given area and then if that worked out move on to the next step. General de Gaulle said that he agreed with the President that any effective disarmament program would have to move by step, but he thought of his idea after Khrushchev had told him in Paris that the Americans talked about disarmament but did not really want to disarm and that Khrushchev had said.....
..... General de Gaulle did not believe that he really would, but it might be useful to put the proposal to him so as to embarrass him. He was talking vaguely of disarmament and trying to shift the onus for lack of progress to the West.

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The President said that if Khrushchev were really willing to allow effective inspection, we might be able to go along, but his experience with the Russians since 1945 had led him to doubt their good faith. They might agree to inspection and then say that this only meant one flight of a plane from Leningrad to Kiev per week. They were saying, "let us disarm first and then check afterwards." General de Gaulle said that this was exactly what Khrushchev had said to him in Paris. This could not be done and he agreed with the President that effective inspection was essential. The President said that what he was seeking in a given geographic area was to determine whether such inspection could be done properly and whether there was good will on the part of the Russians. If this proved to be the case, we could then move on to the next step. But if he could be convinced that Khrushchev would really allow inspection of all launching sites and strategic air bases, he might be willing to develop our inspection techniques as we went along.



General de Gaulle then said that we should think about what we would say on Berlin if Khrushchev brought this matter up as he surely would. His feeling was that we should say that this matter required a better atmosphere and we should see what could be done through disarmament and other means to create such an atmosphere. The President agreed with this and said that we should say that we were in favor of self-determination

of all these peoples. Khrushchev said that he was trying to clear up the vestiges of the war, but the situation prevailing in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and East Berlin were also vestiges of the war. We should say that we were in favor of a referendum supervised by the United Nations to let these people express themselves. Of course Khrushchev would say that we were the slaves of Adenauer and jumped when he cracked the whip. Adenauer was our ally and we would not let him down. Nevertheless, during the two years "moratorium" on Berlin which Khrushchev had mentioned to General de Gaulle, it was to be hoped that after his elections he could be a little more flexible. General de Gaulle said that he had told Khrushchev that the West would not allow itself to be forced out of Berlin, and if he mentioned this two-year period following which an agreement would have to be reached with the German Democratic Republic, that would not do either as it would be a threat. The President said that he had made it quite plain to Khrushchev in that same room at Camp David, with only an interpreter present, that he would not go to any summit hat in hand or under any threat or time limit and that Khrushchev had agreed to raise the time limit and threat, but that when he had told Gromyko and Menshikov they had become very agitated. Nevertheless the Soviets had agreed that the President could say that there was no threat or time limit at his press conference and that Khrushchev would confirm this upon his return to the Soviet Union, and that this was what had actually happened.



General de Gaulle said that we might remove a thousand men of the garrison or some small gesture of this type, but refuse absolutely anything that would alter our legal right to be in Berlin. He had told Khrushchev that the West would not allow itself to be pushed out of Berlin. Khrushchev had not gotten excited and said that after this two-year period he would have to sign a treaty with the German Democratic Republic. The President again reiterated his position against negotiating with any kind of a time limit or threat suspended over us, and General de Gaulle agreed with this.

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The President said that we knew that a great deal of equipment had been delivered to Nasser and that the Soviets were talking of arms deliveries to Guinea and we were keeping our eye on this. We had delivered weapons to small states on the edge of Communist power such as Iran, Viet-nam and Korea that had been directly threatened by the Soviets. We could prove that we had not been aggressive and it was therefore very difficult to equate their arms deliveries and ours. However, perhaps something could be worked out on a regional basis in Africa or in Latin America. General de Gaulle said that it would be difficult for us to give no arms at all to our friends and the President replied that he meant weapons other than those to maintain law and order. President Alessandri of Chile had proposed general disarmament for Latin America and the United States had supported this. Possibly, as he had said, something might be worked out on a regional basis.



The President of France then said that he knew that the President was not enthused by the idea of something being done for the underdeveloped nations jointly with the Soviets, but he wondered if it might not be possible to attempt some specific program such as the development of the Nile Valley or the eradication of tuberculosis in India, for which each of the four nations, or others if they joined, could provide some doctors, medicine and money. The President said that our experience was that the Soviets had refused to have any part in the various programs that the United Nations had undertaken -- preplanning studies, Children's fund, and others. They had finally furnished a small quantity of fissionable material to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna but experience had shown that either they refused to participate, or if they did participate in a very small way they felt that this small participation gave them all sorts of rights and

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wanted to send in large numbers of personnel for subversive purposes. However, perhaps on some specific limited objective something could be done. General de Gaulle said that he made the suggestion because Khrushchev had told him that he would go along with a program of this type.

The President said that he had promised General de Gaulle that he would get him back to Washington by 5 P. M., and the interview concluded and it was agreed that they would meet on Monday, the 25th, with the Foreign Ministers in the President's office. The President of the United States and the President of France then left Camp David for Washington after agreeing to allow the Press Secretaries to say that at the conclusion of General de Gaulle's visit there would be a brief communique.



Vernon Walters
Lt. Colonel, U. S. Army